

VZCZCXRO8623  
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHAK #1439/01 1581418  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 071418Z JUN 07  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2474  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU  
RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5//  
RHMFISS/39ABG CP INCIRLIK AB TU  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC//  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001439

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2027

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: ELECTION LISTS GIVE GLIMPSE OF OPPOSITION  
PRIORITIES

REF: ANKARA 1437

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, for Reasons 1.4 (b  
,d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. The recently published unofficial election lists signal hidden messages and give clues to opposition parties' campaign plans. Nominally center-left opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) oriented itself as a party opposed to threats to the state, with ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) as Public Enemy #1. It also treated its alliance partner Democratic Left Party (DSP) fairly. Nationalist Action Party (MHP) presented a consistent image of right-wing nationalism. Center-right parties' failure to merge is accentuated by gap-ridden lists. A profusion of independents, each of whom will receive a 2cm column on the final ballot, have flooded provinces across the country. The election lists will become finalized upon the approval of the Supreme Election Board (SEB) on June 8. END SUMMARY.

-----  
CHP's axis is the state  
-----

12. (C) The opposition CHP's election lists drew in candidates from outside its traditional center-left sphere, but the common theme is not centrist, but rather defending against threats to the state, as indicated by the speeches of two of its new (right-wing) members. Center-right politicians unhappy with the failed DP-ANAVATAN merger received good slots. CHP played nicely with its electoral partner DSP, initially granting them 12 seats; just before the submission deadline, Baykal realized two people had been left off and bumped DSP's number to 14. In a handful of provinces, including Mersin, Sivas, and Ordu, CHP determined its candidates by "primaries," probably to maximize the party's vote potential with local personality-power. CHP purged 68 of its current deputies -- mainly those who challenged leader Deniz Baykal.

13. (SBU) CHP nominated 52 female candidates, only 12 of whom are in electable positions. Only 21 candidates between the ages of 30-35 appear on the lists -- almost none in electable positions -- but found places for 81 candidates over the age of 60. CHP also claims the youngest candidate, with Onur Bicer (31). The eldest candidate -- destined to be the initial parliamentary speaker until a new one can be elected,

is Sukru Elekdag (81). Of CHP candidates, only 378 are university graduates.

14. (SBU) DSP's Foreign Affairs advisor Huseyin Pazarci takes the first position in Balikesir, while right-winger Ilhan Kesici will run against Erdogan in Istanbul's first district. Recent ANAVATAN members Edip Saftir Gaydali is running from Bitlis and his colleague Lutfullah Kayalar heads the list in Yozgat. Eurasia Strategic Research Center (ASAM) General Coordinator Necdet Pamir takes the first slot in Aksaray. One prominent female candidate from Izmir is Guldal Mumcu, wife of assassinated journalist Ugur Mumcu. Two main organizers of the "Republic Rallies," Nur Serter (Vice Chair of the Ataturkist Thought Association) and Necla Arat (President of the Istanbul Civil Society Organizations) will stand in Istanbul.

-----  
MHP holds the line  
-----

15. (SBU) The only party to remain true to its original line is MHP. The party administration was reportedly very strict in implementing its principles in selecting candidates. MHP lists emphasize businessmen and engineers. Leader Devlet Bahceli apparently raised the bar regarding the candidates' education level; MHP came second only to AKP with 454 university graduates on its list. MHP leader Bahceli will run from Osmancik. The late MHP leader Alpaslan Turkes' son, Tugrul Turkes, holds the first slot in Ankara.

-----  
Smaller parties

ANKARA 00001439 002 OF 003

-----  
16. (C) Because of the failed merger with ANAVATAN, DP's candidate lists are incomplete, with vacancies in 23 provinces (Monday's deadline required parties to submit at least 41 names; gaps can be filled in over the course of this week). A deputy vice chair of the party told us Wednesday that the vacancies would be filled by DP candidates, but press reported Thursday that the leaders of the two parties have revived their effort to cooperate, aiming now at a temporary alliance rather than merger. DP gave credible slots to a small number of women and youth, but its election chances have declined significantly since the failed merger. Despite party leader Mehmet Agar's years-long and largely successful effort to rehabilitate an image tarred by the 1996 Susurluk scandal, the first row ranking of former MP and tribal leader Sedat Bucak -- the only survivor of the infamous car accident that exposed nefarious links between politics, the police, and the underworld -- in Bucak's stronghold of Sanliurfa has renewed focus on Agar's shadowy past.

17. (C) Genc Parti, headed by businessman Cem Uzan (who bilked Motorola for \$2 billion) is opportunistically grasping at whatever it finds useful. Two districts in Istanbul are headed by deputy Emin Sirin and immensely popular singer/restaurant/gangster Ibrahim Tatlis (the latter may not make it past the SEB).

18. (C) ANAVATAN (Motherland) has a substantial election list, but its chances to cross parliament's 10 percent threshold since failing to merge with DP -- already marginal -- have declined drastically; if it succeeds in negotiating an eleventh-hour alliance with DP, it would receive a number of slots on DP's list. Necmettin Erbakan's Islamist Saadet Partisi (SP) optimistically offers voters a full complement, but is unlikely to win any seats.

-----  
Independents: profusion confusion  
-----

¶9. (C) Approximately 500-600 "independent" candidates have flooded the electoral system in most provinces, including at least 100 in Istanbul's 3 districts, 43 in Izmir, 42 in Ankara, and at least 39 in Diyarbakir. The result is a staggeringly long and certainly confusing ballot, ranging from a minimum of 64cm wide to 2m 16cm, depending on the province. The pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) is making the most organized and comprehensive use of the independent candidate process (septel); the heads of four small parties, including DTP, seek to be elected as independents: Ahmet Turk, DTP (Mardin); Muhsin Yazicioglu, Grand Unity Party (BBP) (Sivas); Ufuk Uras, Freedom and Solidarity Party (ODP) (Istanbul); and Levent Tuzel, Toil Party (EMEP) (Izmir). Former Prime Minister and former Motherland head Mesut Yilmaz, partially credited with crashing ANAVATAN's merger with DP, will stand for election in his stronghold Rize. Akin Birdal, former Human Rights Association president and assassination attempt survivor, will stand in Diyarbakir. Leftist academic Baskin Oran expected DTP backing in his independent candidacy in Istanbul; DTP has reportedly withdrawn its support.

-----  
Comment  
-----

¶10. (C) CHP's list speaks to Turks' fears of AKP's alleged agenda to dismantle the secular republic and signals that Deniz Baykal will not tolerate dissent any more than Prime Minister and AKP chairman Erdogan (reftel). To convey these messages, the party has purged its ranks and reached out to, or been approached by, traditional rivals. At the same time, it has snubbed old allies; one MP close to Baykal last fall dismissed the importance of Alevi Muslims, an attitude borne out in CHP's absence at a recent Pir Sultan (Alevi) conference and otherwise signaling its disinterest in the Alevi community. MHP's predictable stable of nationalist candidates reminds us of the country's number one political

ANKARA 00001439 003 OF 003

concern before this spring's AKP-CHP standoff -- the rise of ultranationalism -- and suggests that as terrorist attacks eat away at public confidence, or if a cross-border operation occurs, MHP is well-positioned to build on its perennial core of ultranationalist voters. Ballots will groan under the weight of independent candidates, an indeterminate number of whom may simply be nuisance candidates; wherever they come from, the sheer numbers of independents will bog down election lines and will undoubtedly sow confusion among even the literate voters. END COMMENT.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON